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THE

RURAL DISTRICT OF ELY

ANNUAL REPORT

for the year

1947

by

K. S. MAURICE-SMITH

M. R. C. S., L. R. C. P.

Medical Officer of Health.

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R U R A L D I S T R I C T C O U N C I L O F E L Y

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR 1947

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to submit my Annual Report for the year ending 31st. December, 1947.

1. STATISTICS: During 1947 the usual statistics have been kept and are available. These are not included in my report according to instructions.

2. GENERAL HEALTH SERVICES:

(a) Ambulances. (i) Infectious Cases - Motor Ambulance owned by the Joint Isolation Hospital Committee.

(ii) Non-infectious Cases -

A. Motor Ambulance for Ely Urban and Rural cases stationed at the Urban Council's Depot in Barton Road.

B. Motor Ambulance at Littleport. This is the property of the St. John Ambulance Brigade, and is run and manned by members of the Littleport Divisions of St. John. It is available for civil cases of illness or injury.

Excellent work has been done throughout the year by these vehicles.

(b) Nursing and Clinic Arrangements - These are materially the same as in previous years, and very little comment is necessary here, as the Rural District Council is not responsible for the provision, staffing and equipment of Clinics in the Rural Area.

(c) Isolation Hospital - With the very effecient management and co-operation of the Matron, Miss Bickerskill, S.R.N. an effecient service has been maintained, despite many difficulties.

3. WATER:

(a) The supply for the District is drawn from 2 chalk wells at West Row. The efforts of the Water Engineer and his Staff have maintained adequate supplies throughout the year. The quantity and quality were satisfactory.

(b) (i) The Chloramine Plant has been in use continually and has proved satisfactory. The chloramine process permits of the treatment of the water at the source.
(ii) Four chemical and bacteriological examinations were made during the year, and proved satisfactory.
(iii) No contamination was found during the year.
(iv) The water has no plumbo-solvent action.
(v) The following table shews the percentage of houses in each parish which are supplied respectively with water either direct, or by stand-pipe:-

		Houses Supplied.		
Coveney	.116	direct	6	stand-pipe.
Little Downham . .	.542	"	.37	stand-pipe.
Haddenham	.497	"	.36	" "
Littleport.	1545	"	.40	" "
Mepal	.111	"	.13	" "
Stretham	.325	"	.11	" "
Sutton	.438	"	.21	" "
Little Thetford . .	69	"	8	" "
Wentworth	36	"	1	" "
Wilburton	.173	"	9	" "
Witcham	.114	"	5	" "
Witchford	.199	"	.10	" "
	4165		197	

As will be seen from these figures, the whole of the population is supplied either directly or indirectly with water.

4. SEWAGE:

No new works or important additions have been made during the year. Comprehensive schemes for the whole of the district are still being elaborated, and much work has been put on these.
The number of houses in the District which are:-

(a) Connected to main sewers - 1169.

(b) Not connected to main sewers - 3193.

5. HOUSING:

(a) Constant attention is maintained in association with the Sanitary Inspector to the Housing situation generally in the District; and action is taken whenever necessary.

(b) Strenuous efforts are continuing to be made by the Council to cope with the great and many problems presented by the Housing Crisis. That these efforts, together with those of past years, are, beginning to shew results is more evident to the public. The temporary accommodation at Local Airfields referred to in my Report for 1946 is proving very useful, but it is to be regretted that some of those now residing therein, do not appreciate fully that these huts are only of a temporary character, and that it is not possible as a result to provide in them all the amenities of a permanent Council house.

(c) During the year 73 permanent houses (including the reinstatement of 3 houses destroyed as the result of war damage) have been completed. With the exception of the parishes of Haddenham and Wentworth, these houses are distributed throughout the District according to the local need. There have been 54 temporary conversions of service hutments, on local Airfields.

6. SCHOOLS:

Further comments on this urgent problem should be unnecessary.

7. MILK SUPPLY:

(a) Cowsheds: As I stated in my Report for 1946, I cannot admit that I find cowshed conditions at all satisfactory in many cases. Every effort is made, with the Sanitary Inspector, to improve matters, but more willing and effecient co-operation on the part of some cow-keepers would be very much appreciated.

(b) Milk Examinations: These are carried out as and when thought fit, and the results vary from good to bad.

8. INFECTIOUS DISEASES:

(a) 208 notifications of infectious diseases were received, including 158 cases of measles. Fortunately with few exceptions, the cases of measles were of a mild type, with comparitively few complications. I am aware

8. INFECTIOUS DISEASES (Contd.)

(a) that I am at variance with some authorities, but I am definately of the opinion that, especially in Rural Areas, much can be done to diminish the prevalence of infectious disease during an epidemic by the closing of schools.

The total of 208 - was made up as follows:-

Measles	158
Pneumonia	33
Infective Hepatitis	13
Scarlet Fever	3
Erysipelas.	1
	208

(b) Disinfection of premises etc., is regularly carried out in cases of notifiable disease; also when infection is reported, or requests are received for any special reasons. Clothing and bedding are disinfected at the Joint Isolation Hospital.

(c) The arrangements for the treatment of scabies cases, which were made with Wisbech in 1944 are still maintained. The incidence of this disease is at a very low level in the area.

(d) Tuberculosis: 11 New cases were notified during the year. After making the necessary adjustments, there are now the following numbers on the Register:-

	Respiratory:	Non-Respiratory:
Male	21	13
Female	17	12

Compared with 1946, the increase in the total number of cases on the Register is 6 made up as follows:-

Male	3	-
Female	-	3

9. FLOODING:

Following the severe snow falls during the opening months of the year, the District was much affected by flooding during the months of March and April.

9. FLOODING.(Contd.)

At one time, all roads out of the District with the exception of the Ely-Newmarket, Ely-Chatteris main roads were impassible; and the only railway line working was the Ely-Newmarket one.

In Littleport, flooding of the Station Road, White Hart Lane, City Road, Sandhill and Padnall areas was extensive; and areas in Burnt Fen, Little Downham and Little Thetford villages were among those affected by water.

Where necessary, evacuation of residents in affected areas was carried out, those having to leave being either accommodated by friends in neighbouring villages or else at neighbouring airfields.

Except in those areas definately flooded there was no major break in any existing essential service.

Plans were drawn up to cope with possible situations should flooding have become more extensive and serious, but fortunately they were not required.

Careful watch was made by the responsible Officers of the Council, especially on the water supply, and steps were taken whenever necessary to prevent the outbreak of disease due to contamination etc.

It is of interest to note that no outbreak of any major infectious disease occurrred in the areas flooded after the subsidence of the water, despite the non-existence of any organised sewers or sewage disposal plant.

For record purposes, I append to this report a copy of a factual record of the floods, entitled "The Battle of the Banks" - drawn up and published by the Rotary Club of Ely.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

K. S. MAURICE-SMITH

Medical Officer of Health,
Ely Rural District Council.